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Subject: WE Brainstorm
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Diana, Danica, Peter, Mike & Devon,

Thanks for including me in your brainstorming session yesterday. The final outcome was quite intriguing. Having slept on it, I feel compelled to offer one other bit of advice from some recent magazine repositioning I've been doing at AARP to create an entirely new Third Age media enterprise for Boomers. Here it is for what it's worth:

- Start with a clean slate. The Point Foundation may want to consider directing all that new energy for the Ultimate Game (working title) into creating an entirely new magazine-based omnimedia enterprise, instead of trying to stuff it into the old Whole Earth shell.
- Use the credibility of the Whole Earth association/Point Foundation community as a springboard for making the Ultimate Game an immediate authority.
- Raise new money separately for Ultimate Game. Don't ask people to reimagine Whole Earth. New team, new magazine paints more possibilities. Why limit yourself?
- Continue to publish WE with Peter's current editorial vision, perhaps strengthening its focus and specific audience appeal in contrast to that of the new Ultimate Game (I see two different audiences for the two magazines--trying to bridge the two in one magazine, as we discussed yesterday, may undercut the success of both)
- Combine staff and operating functions of the two magazines to provide efficiencies for continuing to publish WE at a breakeven deficit (that is hire a separate editor for UG, but share edit, circulation, admin, ad staffs between the two. Only assign direct and incremental costs to WE--printing, postage, direct mail, etc. Have UG carry the rest--assuming that staff can work on both).
- Raise a modest amount of angel money to invest in restoring the circulation health of WE (I realized yesterday that 20M circulation without ANY circulation investment for three years is relatively robust. I just consulted on a start-up that spent $10 million to get to 50M subscribers. You've got a bargain there).

This strategy means that you would have to pursue two tracks--taking immediate steps to shore up WE for the next year while you put together a business plan for UG and go out for funding.

Best,

John